

Lesson 1

What issues are interesting for us?

The students take part in planning the debate

Please note: this lesson takes place three weeks in advance of the others

This matrix sums up the information a teacher needs to plan and deliver the lesson.	
Competence training refers directly to EDC/HRE.	
The learning objective indicates what students know and understand.	
The student task(s), together with the method, form the core element of the learning process.	
The materials checklist supports lesson preparation.	
The time budget gives a rough guideline for the teacher's time management.	
Competence training	Taking responsibility; selecting items and materials by applying a set of criteria.
Learning objective	Criteria for selecting issues for a debate in class: political relevance, students' interests, links to students' understanding and experience.
Student tasks	The students brainstorm ideas and collect information on issues for the debate.
Materials and resources	Information through the media. Records of personal experience and findings. Flipchart on the wall to display the students' suggestions, with checklist (names of students with a tick box). ✍ Student handout 8.1.
Method	Work in tandem teams.
Time budget	Getting the students involved. 15 min
	Introduction of the task. 10 min
	Work in tandem teams. 15 min
	Interval between lessons 1 and 2. 3 weeks

Information for the teacher: why this lesson takes place three weeks in advance

This lesson takes place three weeks in advance of the others to enable the students to prepare an input for the second lesson and to take part in planning the debate in lesson 3. This lesson serves as an **advance organiser**: the students acquire the information that they need for a task beforehand.

Taking part in planning lessons corresponds to taking part in the community. In all cases the active citizen is the informed citizen. Viewed from this perspective, the advance organiser in this unit demonstrates a general principle of participation in democracy.

The advance organiser requires a time span of approximately three weeks between the first and second lessons. (The teacher must therefore decide how to use the lessons within this interval.) The advance organiser consists of two phases:

Phase 1 (two weeks): the students work in tandem teams. At the end of phase 1, each team has worked out a suggestion for a debating issue that they think is interesting and suitable. They provide information material for the class (one page).

A deadline defines the date when phase 1 ends and phase 2 begins.

Phase 2 (one week): reading time. At the end of phase 2, every student knows all the suggested issues and has read all the materials. Each student has chosen an issue for the debate.

Time structure for the advance organiser

Lessons	Lesson 1		Lesson 2	
Student activities	Phase 1 The students work out their suggestion for a debating issue.		Phase 2 The students read the proposals. The class chooses an issue by vote.	
Time line	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	
Deadline →				

Lesson description

Preparations before the lesson

For step 1, line of debating: if necessary, the teacher has cleared the classroom for the debating exercise.

For step 2.3, instructions on the task: the teacher has attached two flipchart sheets to the wall in the classroom.

1. Getting the students involved

Preparation: the teacher marks a line on the floor with a piece of string, about five metres long. The students will need enough space to be able to stand on either side of this line, facing each other. If the classroom is too small or too crowded, this exercise can be done in the corridor.

The teacher asks the students to stand up and form a circle around the line. Then the teacher announces: “Every child should spend an additional year at school.”

The teacher asks the students to move to one side of the line – to the left, if they support the statement, to the right if they disagree. They spend a few minutes sharing their reasons and ideas.

Then the teacher asks the groups to exchange their arguments. There are a few rules to be observed:

1. The two sides take turns in presenting an argument.
2. The speakers must not be interrupted.
3. The speakers have 30 seconds to make their points.

The students then engage in an exchange of arguments that resembles a debate. After five minutes, or earlier if one side has run out of ideas, the teacher stops the debate and asks the students to return to their seats – ideally arranged in an open square to support communication.

2. Introduction of the task

2.1 Why debating is important for taking part in democracy

The teacher refers to the previous activity – it was a debate. Within a short time, many ideas and arguments were exchanged. The students may comment on their experience.

The teacher explains that the students should develop their debating skills, as many discussions in democratic settings are conducted in this way. Citizens enjoy the human rights to free opinion and expression, but they need debating skills to exercise them.

The teacher makes sure that the students understand and accept this definition of their training task.

2.2 Clarification: what makes a good issue for a debate?

The teacher refers to the topic – it was a good issue for a debate, as the students showed. What makes a good issue for a debate?

The teacher listens to the students’ ideas and suggestions, and sums them up in keywords on the blackboard or flipchart. It may be expected that they will largely correspond to the five criteria (3a-3e) on *≈* student handout 8.1.

The teacher explains that the forthcoming debate will be more interesting, and the students will be more successful if they carry out the debate on an issue of their choice. They therefore have the opportunity to choose an issue in the next lesson in three weeks time. Until then, they should develop suggestions for the issue the debate is to be held on. The class will make a choice in the second lesson.

The teacher distributes *see* student handout 8.1 and refers to the criteria the students have suggested and asks them to compare them with the criteria under 3a-3e on the handout. If the students and teacher agree to modify the list of criteria, they do so.

2.3 Task instructions: collecting the ideas on the flipchart

The teacher goes to the flipcharts on the wall and asks the students to read *see* student handout 8.1 while he/she draws the following layout:

What is a good issue for a debate?			
Everyday or school life	Social or cultural issues	Political issues	Other issues

After the students have read the handout, the teacher refers to the flipchart. The issue the students discussed at the beginning of the lesson was a political issue – how education should be organised in our country. But other issues are interesting too:

- Political issues;
- Social issues;
- Issues in school or everyday life;
- Other issues – for all other ideas.

The students can either draw on their personal experience or what they know about the current political agenda, or they can search for information.

At this point, the students should have some examples. The teacher encourages the students to come forward with their ideas. If this proves too difficult, the teacher can help with these examples:

- *Everyday or school life*: “Cars do more harm than good.”
- *Social or cultural issues*: “Television plays a positive role in society.”
(Or: the Internet, mobile phones, etc.)
- *Political issues*: “Women should be treated the same as men.”

2.4 Task instructions: observing the deadline

Finally the teacher explains why there is a deadline. To give everyone the chance to read the materials, a deadline is given – five school days before the first lesson is due. The students must understand that they will select the issue, but they must have read the materials beforehand. Otherwise a democratic vote cannot take place, as this has to be organised efficiently within the time available during the lesson. There will be no time during the lesson to read the materials.

The teacher tells the students where to deposit their note sheet and materials.

Finally he/she points out that it is important for the students to make up their minds which issue they would like hold the debate on.

3. Work in tandem teams

The students form tandem teams and work on their own, following the instructions given on the handout and during the lesson. They set their own homework.